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THE ORDER
MARVEL
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SECRET INVASION
WHO DO YOU TRUST?
04.2008
RATED T+
DIRECT EDITION
00911
7 59606 06195 2
$2.99 US $3.05 CAN

In the aftermath of the civil war that pitted hero against hero, Iron Man, a.k.a. Tony Stark, envisioned a new world order – one of responsibility and supervision, where super heroes are federally registered and held accountable to the people they protect. As the new director of the peacekeeping agency S.H.I.E.L.D., Stark personally took charge, creating the 50-State Initiative: A program placing highly trained super hero teams in each state of the nation. The Order is the first such team. Based in California, it is the crown jewel of the Initiative.

Outstanding Americans carefully recruited from a corps of volunteers, the members of the Order have one thing in common: They were all heroes in the "real" world, in ways both great and small. Rigorously trained in their astonishing new powers, the team is backed by the finest public relations and marketing that money can buy.

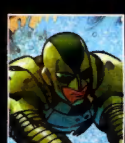
# WELCOME TO THE ORDER

TONY STARK
IRON MAN

PEPPER POTTS
HERA

HENRY HELLRUNG
ANTHEM

MAGDALENA MARIE
VEDA



DENNIS MURRAY
HEAVY

MULHOLLAND BLACK
MULHOLLAND

JAMES WA
CALAMITY

BECKY RYAN
ARALUNE

MILO FIELDS
SUPERNAUT

After saving the San Gabriel mountains from the volatile Infernal Man, most of the team's starting lineup was replaced for drinking and partying in violation of their contract's morality and ethics clauses. One of their number, Avona, was found murdered on the Los Angeles Metro. The trail led to the Black Dahlias, a vigilante girl gang that Mulholland once belonged to. The Dahlias were now working for General Softly, a shadowy military man intent on taking the Order apart. At his command, the Dahlias captured Mulholland and injected her with super-power-inhibiting nanobots. And a trap sprung by Softly neutralized the team's shapeshifter, Aralune, and the one-man heavy-artillery unit, Supernaut. An electromagnetic discharge fried Milo Fields' Supernaut suit, and turned Becky Ryan into a puddle of goo unable to control her form. But just when Softly had them cornered for the kill, Milo and Becky realized they could join forces – by linking their nervous systems through the spinal input jacks that let Milo control his suit, Milo and Becky fused together to create a powerful human-machine hybrid, which they called Hybrid.

But when Hybrid turned the tables on Softly, they learned the army man's deadly secret. He was an advanced-model android, and just one out of dozens, maybe even hundreds – not the mastermind the Order thought he was, but merely the puppet of someone even more evil.

Unbeknownst to the Order, that "someone" is the twenty-something super-genius Ezekiel Stane, son of Iron Man's late arch-rival, Obadiah Stane. Zeke Stane has deployed Maul, one of the members of the Order's original lineup, along with the Dahlias, Infernal Man and an army of Softlys, to destroy the Order and advance his as-yet-unknown agenda. But just as Stane seemed about to unleash his endgame, the unexpected happened. Mulholland's natural-born mutant powers – long thought lost – came back with a vengeance…

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**THE ORDER No. 9, May, 2008.** Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016.
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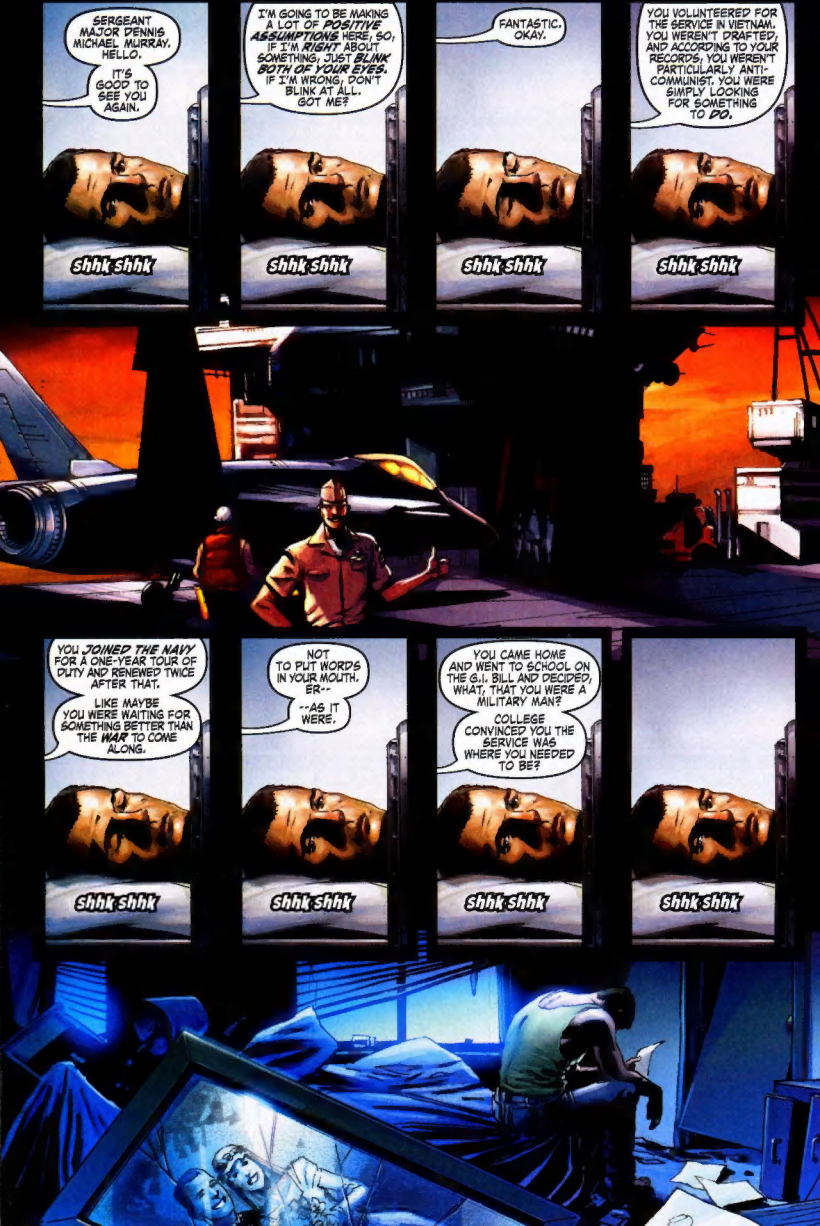

SERGEANT MAJOR DENNIS MICHAEL MURRAY. HELLO.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
I'M GOING TO BE MAKING A LOT OF POSITIVE ASSUMPTIONS HERE, SO, IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT SOMETHING, JUST BLINK BOTH OF YOUR EYES. IF I'M WRONG, DON'T BLINK AT ALL. GOT ME?
FANTASTIC. OKAY.
YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR THE SERVICE IN VIETNAM. YOU WEREN'T DRAFTED, AND ACCORDING TO YOUR RECORDS, YOU WEREN'T PARTICULARLY ANTI-COMMUNIST. YOU WERE SIMPLY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO.
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk
YOU JOINED THE NAVY FOR A ONE-YEAR TOUR OF DUTY AND RENEWED TWICE AFTER THAT.
LIKE MAYBE YOU WERE WAITING FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN THE WAR TO COME ALONG.
NOT TO PUT WORDS IN YOUR MOUTH. ER--
--AS IT WERE.
YOU CAME HOME AND WENT TO SCHOOL ON THE G.I. BILL AND DECIDED, WHAT, THAT YOU WERE A MILITARY MAN?
COLLEGE CONVINCED YOU THE SERVICE WAS WHERE YOU NEEDED TO BE?
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk
Shhk shhk

ANYWAY, BACK INTO THE SERVICE YOU WENT. THE WAR WAS OVER AND YOU BEGAN TO RISE UP THE LADDER.
YOU WENT FROM SEAMAN TO WARRANT OFFICER IN NO TIME.
shhk shhk
SERVICE-WISE, YOU WENT WHERE THE ACTION WAS, BUT CAREER-WISE, YOU NEVER WENT FURTHER THAN WARRANT OFFICER.
YOU WERE ASKED WHY YOU DIDN'T WANT A PROMOTION.
shhk shhk
YOU SAID, ACCORDING TO YOUR RECORDS, "I CAN'T BE THE KIND OF #@$@# YOU'LL NEED ME TO BE."
PRETTY FUNNY.
shhk shhk
SO YOU GOT MOVED FROM SHIP TO SHIP, A WORKING MAN'S SAILOR.
THEN CAME THE DAY YOU WERE TASKED TO ESCORT A CIVILIAN V.I.P. ONSHORE. DO YOU REMEMBER?
shhk shhk
THERE WERE TWO FATALITIES AND TWO PROFOUND INJURIES.
ONE INJURY WAS SOMEWHAT FAMOUSLY TREATED, AND THE PATIENT RECOVERED FULLY.
shhk shhk
AND YOU WERE CONSIGNED TO THIS.
A GIANT TUBE IN THE V.A. HOSPITAL.
shhk shhk
DENNIS, WE'VE COME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE.
WE'D KEEP YOU SUBMERGED IN A KIND OF SUPERCOLLOIDAL FLUID. YOU'D BE MOBILE AND THE FLUID WOULD TAKE CARE OF YOUR BREATHING.
shhk shhk
YOU'D HAVE SUPER-STRENGTH, AND SOME POWERS WE'D FIGURE OUT A LITTLE LATER.
THIS WOULD LAST ABOUT A YEAR. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED, WARRANT OFFICER MURRAY?
shhk shhk shhk
shhk shhk shhk

# THE ORDER 9: DENNIS --OR-- BAD MOON RISING

WRITTEN BY **MATT FRACTION** BREAKDOWNS BY **BARRY KITSON**
PENCILS BY **JAVIER SALTARES** INKS BY **STEFANO GAUDIANO & DEREK FRIDOLFS**
COLORS BY **SOTOCOLOR'S J. ROBERTS** LETTERS BY **ARTMONKEYS STUDIOS**
**ALEJANDRO ARBONA** EDITOR **WARREN SIMONS** SUPERVISING EDITOR
**JOE QUESADA** EDITOR IN CHIEF **DAN BUCKLEY** PUBLISHER

WE'RE GOING TO RUN A COMMANDO RAID ON A SUPERHUMAN THREAT THAT'S GOT ONE OF OUR OWN HELD HOSTAGE.
GET READY, ORDER--WE'RE GOING TO WAR.

I'M CEDING OPERATIONAL CONTROL IN THE FIELD OVER TO HEAVY, GANG-- HE'S GOT THE EXPERIENCE TO LEAD US THROUGH THIS THING.
HE'S A MILITARY MAN AND RIGHT NOW WE NEED A MILITARY MIND.
"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it."
--Theodore Roosevelt
THANK YOU, SIR. I'LL DO MY BEST.
WE KNOW THESE GUYS ARE ORGANIZED. WE KNOW THEY'RE DANGEROUS, AND UNAFRAID TO SPILL BLOOD. BUT WE'RE STILL GOING INTO A KNOWN UNKNOWN.
WE HAVE TO STAY TIGHT AND CONTROLLED AND TOGETHER. RIGHT?
RIGHT.
"Who serves his country well has no need of ancestors." --Voltaire
MILO.
YES, SIR.
I NEED SUPER-SOLDIERS RIGHT NOW, SON.
YES, SIR.
AND YOUR SUPERNAULT SUIT WAS DESTROYED. WITHOUT IT, YOU'RE ONLY A SOLDIER. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
"I think the most common misperception about war in general is people think it's glamorous and glorious and wonderful, and it isn't."
--Army Sgt. Kevin Benderman

RESPECTFULLY, SIR--WHEN BECKY AND I WERE TRAPPED IN THE DESERT WE--
--BECAME HYBRID--AND THROUGH WORKING TOGETHER--WITH MILO PILOTING MY NERVOUS SYSTEM, WE--
ABSOLUTELY NOT. AND I'M NOT THRILLED YOU TWO ARE HAVING AN EXTRACURRICULAR RELATIONSHIP.
SIR--
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR--
GENERAL SOFTLY--OR WHATEVER THE HELL HE IS--TORE US APART, SEPARATELY. TOGETHER--
MILO, WE APPRECIATE THE ENTHUSIASM, BUT THERE'S NO TIME, YOU HAVEN'T TRAINED IN TANDEM, YOU--
HENRY, WAIT--THEY'VE GOT A POINT.
TOGETHER THEY SHUT DOWN THREE GAMMA BEASTS AND TERMINATED A SOFTLY UNIT--THEY'VE TRAINED SEPARATELY AND UNDERSTAND GROUP TACTICS--
DENNIS--
DIDN'T YOU PUT ME IN CHARGE OF ALL THIS JUST TWO SECONDS AGO?
DENNIS... I DON'T... I CAN'T STAND TO LOSE ANY OTHER PEOPLE.
HENRY.
WE NEED TO GO IN WITH MORE RATHER THAN LESS. BECAUSE IF WE DON'T--
THEY'RE GONNA KILL US ALL.

IT'S ABOUT A THREE-HOUR DRIVE FROM HERE TO THE SALTON SEA, GIVE OR TAKE. AIRBORNE SHOULD TAKE ABOUT A HALF-HOUR.

LET'S GO GIVE 'EM HELL, TEAM.

HERA FIELD LOG: *MISSION 126 RECORDING*

FOR **THE ORDER** TO GET TO WHERE WE'RE GOING, YOU TAKE THE 10 TO THE 111. WHEN YOU FLY YOU FOLLOW THE HIGHWAYS.

SHH. SUPER HERO SECRET.

FOR **TWO YEARS** AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY--THE **LAST** CENTURY--THE COLORADO RIVER FLOW WAS MISMANAGED AND FILLED THE SALTON SINK WITH THE SALTON **SEA.**

SO THE SALTON SEA IS A SALINE LAKE LOCATED INLAND JUST SOUTH OF JOSHUA TREE. ONCE UPON A TIME IT WAS GOING TO BE THE NEXT **PALM SPRINGS.**

IT DIDN'T TAKE. CALIFORNIA **MOVED ON.**

THE WIND BLOWS AND ALL YOU CAN SMELL IS DEAD FISH AND SALT AND DECAY.

EVERYTHING ABOUT THE SALTON SEA SCREAMS **DEATH** AND **DISASTER.**

HOW **FITTING.**

INTRUDER ALERT

THE ***ORDER*** HAS ARRIVED. SEND THE WELCOMING PARTY--

--FLANK LEFT, M.E.N. FROM S.H.A.D.O.W.! DON'T LET THAT LITTLE TROLLOP GET OUT ALIVE!
MAYBE NAME-CALLING THE REAWAKENED TELEKINETIC AIN'T THE SMARTEST MOVE, OLD MAN.
KOOOOOM
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
WHAT BROKE INSIDE OF YOU TO MAKE YOU THROW IN WITH MONSTERS LIKE THESE?
THEY MADE NIGHTMARES HERE. THEY PERFORMED HORRORS HERE.
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?
SHUT UP, HOLLY.
BLAM BLAM BLAM

GAHH--
STUPID--
WHY YOU GOTTA RUIN EVERYTHING?
KRAK
ALL YOU GOTTA DO TO NOT BE A TOTALLY USELESS WASTE OF SPACE IS LIE STILL AND LET US HOOK INTO YOUR BRAIN, HOLLY.
WE'RE GONNA GIVE EVERYBODY SUPER-POWERS. DON'T YOU GET THAT?
WHY SHOULD THE ORDER GET TO DECIDE?
WE'RE HEROES.
WE'RE GONNA--
DAMMIT!
YOU THINK I NEED MY HAMMER TO MESS YOU--
--UP?
THD

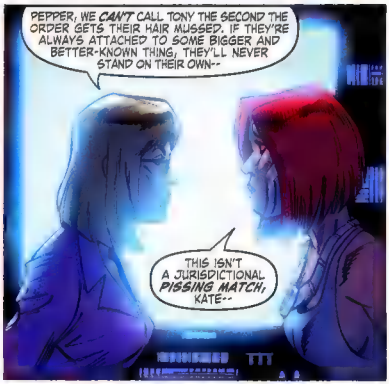
COME TO MOMMA--
"NOW I HAVE A MACHINE GUN. HO HO HO."
FFWHAMM
=GUHKK=
BLAM BLAM BLAM
ALL RIGHT, "CUT." YOU READY TO SETTLE THIS THING ONCE AND FOR--
HOLLY.
"SHOOT THE GLASS."
ZZRRRKKK
UHHFFF
EZEKIEL STANE. HI.
I'VE GOT PLANS FOR YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS...

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, NIKITA.
THIS HERE'S MILITARY PROPERTY YOU'RE TRESPASSING ON.
AND WE HAVE ORDERS TO KILL TRESPASSERS ON SIGHT.
CALAMITY. VEDA.
HYBRID, YOU'RE WITH ME.
ON IT.
INCOMING.
KRA-KOOOM

KEEP PRESSING, TEAM.
THEY'RE FALLING BACK!
THIS WAS JUST A WELCOME PARTY.
THEY WANTED US TO KNOW WE FOUND THE RIGHT PLACE.
THE REAL ACTION'S WAITING INSIDE.
INTO THE BELLY OF THE BEAST WE GO.

WHAT THE HELL--
SOMETHING'S WRONG.
WHAT?
SOMETHING'S REALLY WRONG.

THEY'RE GONE--THE WHOLE TEAM--
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GONE?
I MEAN THE WHOLE TEAM IS-- WE NEED STARK. NOW.


PEPPER, WE CAN'T CALL TONY THE SECOND THE ORDER GETS THEIR HAIR MUSSED. IF THEY'RE ALWAYS ATTACHED TO SOME BIGGER AND BETTER-KNOWN THING, THEY'LL NEVER STAND ON THEIR OWN--
THIS ISN'T A JURISDICTIONAL PISSING MATCH, KATE--

THEY'RE GONE. THEY'RE COMPLETELY GONE. I DON'T MEAN WE HAVE BAD RECEPTION; I DON'T MEAN SOMEONE'S RADIO IS OFF.
I'M STITCHED INTO THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, AND I'M TELLING YOU THAT, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES--

THE ENTIRE CALIFORNIA PRESENCE OF THE INITIATIVE HAS VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

WE SHOULD CALL STARK.

BREAK THROUGH! COME ON!
HA HA. BROKE.
KEEP FOCUSED, GANG.
THE M.E.N. FROM S.H.A.D.O.W. ARE THINNING--
'SUP, JERKS?
MISS US?
WE SURE AS HELL MISSED YOU.

INFERNAL MAN--
WE SHOULD'VE KILLED YOU WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE.
BRAK BRAK BRAK BRAK
:GASP--!:
KOOM
YOU PEOPLE KILLED CARLOS-- YOU KILLED AVONA--
WEAK, OLD MAN.
NEVER
THOUGHT
I'D
MISS
HOLLY.

MULHOLLAND BLACK. HI.
GLAD YOU'RE BACK WITH US.
YOU BLACKED OUT A LITTLE THERE WE [redacted] GETTING THE MACHINE ALL HOOKED UP TO YOU.
I MEAN, I KNOW IT HURT, BUT COME ON, RIGHT?
YOU KILLED MOST OF THE BLACK DAHLIAS, YOU KNOW THAT?
SEE, MY PEOPLE GET [redacted] TO THEIR POWERS [redacted] IN THE LAB. IT'S LIKE PLUGGING INTO A BATTERY CHARGER.
WE HAVE LITTLE BOOSTER SHOTS TO KEEP 'EM CHUGGING ALONG, BUT THEY NEED TO BE HERE, UNDER SEDATION, TO GET THE [redacted] POWER-UPS.
WHEN YOU SPARKED UP, THEY WERE ALL ON THEIR WAY TO BEING UNDER. YOU JUST--
IT WAS NICE [redacted]. I ALWAYS KNEW YOU HAD THAT IN YOU.
I'VE BELIEVED IN YOU FOR A LONG, LONG TIME, MULHOLLAND. [redacted] NOBODY ELSE DID, I DID.
WHEN EVEN YOU DIDN'T SEE VALUE IN HOW REMARKABLE A YOUNG WOMAN YOU ARE.
YOU'RE MORE THAN JUST GIFTED.
YOU'RE PLUGGED INTO THE ENTIRE CITY, TO ITS WHOLE POPULATION.
YOU SURF THE NOOSPHERE ITSELF. EVERYTHING LOS ANGELES IS-- EVERYTHING LOS ANGELES FEELS-- YOU FEEL.

I WAS GONNA GO ON THIS BIG LONG LECTURE ABOUT [redacted] AND [redacted] AND THE TRANSHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND ALL THAT CRAP--
BUT REALLY? WHO CARES. YOU DON'T CARE THAT I DID MY HOMEWORK, RIGHT?
BUT I DID, HOLLY. I DID A LOT OF HOMEWORK TO FIGURE YOU OUT.
AND WHAT YOU'RE CONNECTED TO IS, I THINK, VERY MUCH LIKE THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS OF THE ENTIRE CITY.
SO WHAT I WANT TO DO IS ACCESS THAT UNCONSCIOUS, RIGHT?
I WANT TO USE YOU TO GET INTO LOS ANGELES' HEAD.
THIS THINGY YOU'RE HOOKED UP TO IS BASICALLY A GREAT BIG MICROPHONE THAT'LL ALLOW ME TO DO JUST THAT.
IF YOU'RE A CONDUIT TO WHAT EVERYONE IN L.A. IS THINKING AND FEELING, OR WHAT EVERYONE HAS THOUGHT OR FELT, EVER...
WHAT IF [redacted] USED YOUR POWERS TO TELL L.A. TO JUST SHUT UP AND KILL ITSELF?
WOULDN'T THAT [redacted] AWESOME, IF WE COULD PULL THAT OFF? IF WE COULD SHOW TONY STARK THAT NO AMOUNT OF SUPER-[redacted] WANTS TO STATION ON REDONDO BEACH COULD STOP THE ENTIRE CITY FROM GOING COMPLETELY INSANE?
SMILE, SWEETHEART.
WE'RE ABOUT TO WRITE A GIANT [redacted] YOU TO TONY STARK UP AND DOWN THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY.

GNNNNNAAAAAA

KKKRRRRRRRRRR

GNNNNNAAAAAA
HOLLY.

OH, SHE DEAD BY NOW.
SHE TOTALLY, TOTALLY DEAD.

ORDER--USE LETHAL FORCE. WE'RE DONE SCREWING AROUND WITH THESE MANIACS.
COULDN'T HAVE SAID IT BETTER.
MULHOLLAND BLACK.
WHERE IS SHE?
C'MON. COME ONNNNN.
GET INTO THE ROOM. GET INTO THE--
YAHTZEE!
KFWAM
OH, NO--
KFWAM

FIVE HUNDRED FEET.
IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING HOW FAR YOU WERE JUST SUCKED.

YOU GUYS ARE FIVE HUNDRED FEET UNDERGROUND, SURROUNDED BY VIBRANIUM WALLS TWENTY FEET THICK.
MY OLD MAN BUILT THIS AFTER THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, APPARENTLY. GO DAD, HUH?

I NEEDED YOU THIS FAR DOWN SO THE BOMB WOULDN'T AFFECT ME OR MY STUFF.
WELL, IT'S NOT A BOMB, PER SE. IT'S AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE.

S.P.I.N., SOMA, WHATEVERTHEHELL YOU CALL IT--ALL THE CRAP THAT'S BEEN FUSED IN YOUR BLOOD THAT GIVES YOU SUPER-POWERS? IT'S ALL MACHINE-BASED. IT'S ALL ELECTRONICS.
SO THE E.M.P. WILL WIPE YOU GUYS CLEAN. NO MORE POWERS.

YOU CAN'T-- I--
YOU LYING SACK OF--
HEAVY NEEDS HIS POWERS TO BREATHE--THAT FLUID KEEPS HIM ALIVE--

MAN. TONY STARK IS EVEN DUMBER THAN I THOUGHT.
BYE, ORDER. YOU WERE A BAD IDEA FROM THE WORD GO AND I'M HAPPY TO BE THE ONE TO END YOU.

YOU BASTARRRRRRKKK--!
FRRZZAAAK
NNNG
NNNG
MONSTER--
YOU DAMNED MONSTER--
GET IT OFF-- HELP ME GET HIS HELMET OFF--
WITHOUT THE SOMA NANITES WORKING, THE FLUID IN HIS LUNGS IS LIKE POISON--
NNNG
SPLOOSH
--GGAAAAKAAKKKK--
DENNIS! DENNIS--

TO BE CONCLUDED...